

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 00124 141919Z
ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 AF-08 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ABF-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 IGA-02
/123 W

-----150307Z 046618 /71

R 141720Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 220
INFO US MISSION GENEVA 80
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0124

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, ILO, IS, TD, XL

SUBJECT: ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE

REF: STATE 4508

1. EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
IN THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO MINISTRY OF LABOR
(GEORGE PATRICK) ON JANUARY 13 FOR A GENERAL
DISCUSSION OF ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE AT INTERNATIONAL
LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO). TWO SENIOR MINISTRY
OFFICERS (FRANCIS CORBIE AND NEVILLE ROACH), WHO
USUALLY REPRESENTS TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT ILO
MEETINGS, JOINED THE CONVERSATION. EMBASSY OFFICER
DESCRIBED BACKGROUND OF PROBLEM AS PRESENTED IN
REFTEL AND OUTLINED POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION
WHICH ARAB GROUP MIGHT TAKE AT FORTHCOMING MEETING
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PAGE 02 PORT O 00124 141919Z

OF THE GOVERNING BODY. HE RESTATED WELL-KNOWN US
VIEWS ON THE ISSUE AND ON THE POLITICIZATION OF
THE ILO IN GENERAL.

2. PATRICK SAID THAT THE GOTT HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED
THE FORTHCOMING MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY NOR
ITS ATTITUDE ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE. HOWEVER,

HE WAS PERSONALLY IN FAVOR OF CLOSING THE BOOK ON THE ISSUE AND AVOIDING SIMILAR POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE FUTURE. CORBIE DESCRIBED AT SOME LENGTH HIS EXPERIENCES AT ILO MEETINGS DEALING WITH POLITICAL ISSUES. HE SAID THERE WAS AN INCREASING TENDENCY FOR VOTES ON SUCH ISSUES TO BE TAKEN ON EMOTIONAL RATHER THAN RATIONAL GROUNDS AND THAT GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES FREQUENTLY COERCED THEIR WORKER AND EMPLOYER DELEGATIONS INTO FOLLOWING THE NATIONAL LINE. AT THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY WHICH PRECEDED THE 1976 CONFERENCE, HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN AN ACRIMONIOUS AND EXTENDED DEBATE ON ALLOWING BELIZE TO PARTICIPATE AS PART OF THE UK DELEGATION AND HAD SUCCESSFULLY FOUGHT OFF THE ATTEMPTS BY FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN GROUP TO EXCLUDE BELIZE ON POLITICAL GROUNDS. HE INDICATED THAT HE WAS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE US FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ILO AND SUPPORTED THE VIEW THAT THE US AND OTHER MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ORGANIZATION SHOULD HAVE A CONTINUING AND IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION.

3. EMBASSY OFFICER STRESSED THAT AT THIS POINT THE US WAS EXPLORING THE QUESTION WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY TO SEE WHAT COURSES OF ACTION MIGHT BE TAKEN AND WHAT RESOLUTIONS WERE POSSIBLE. HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT YET ASKING FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE T&T DELEGATION FOR A PARTI-

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PAGE 03 PORT O 00124 141919Z

CULAR RESOLUTION. PATRICK SAID THAT HE WOULD HOLD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THE QUESTIONS DURING THE NEXT WEEK WITH HIS STAFF AND WITH THE MINISTER AND WOULD HAVE SOMETHING MORE DEFINITE TO SAY ON JANUARY 20.

4. COMMENT: THE MINISTRY OF LABOR OFFICIALS APPEARED TO BE IN COMPLETE SYMPATHY WITH THE US POSITION AGAINST USING THE ILO AS A FORUM FOR POLITICAL ISSUES. DURING ACTUAL VOTES ON ISSUES, HOWEVER, THE T&T DELEGATION WILL BE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY GUIDANCE FROM THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WHICH HAS LESS PRECISE FEELINGS ABOUT THE NON-POLITICAL NATURE OF THE ILO. IN ADDITION, THE T&T DELEGATION REPRESENTS THE REST OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN ON THE GOVERNING BODY AND IS THEREFORE SOMEWHAT CIRCUMSCRIBED IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT CAN MOVE AWAY FROM THIRD WORLD CONSENSUS POSITIONS ON CONTROVERSIAL, NON-REGIONAL QUESTIONS.

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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